



MID - C O A S T

REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

166 MAIN STREET, SUITE 201 ~ ROCKLAND, ME 04841

(207) 594-2299 ~ FAX (207) 594-4272

What a Comprehensive Plan is and isn't:

- A comprehensive plan is the collective thoughts of the community as expressed in town wide surveys and meetings with residents and business owners. The plan describes the community and is an expression of the town's vision for its future.
- A comprehensive plan is an official public document, accepted by the state and adopted by municipal government (voters) as a **guide of recommendations** for the future development of the town.
- The comprehensive plan is not an ordinance. **The plan does not enact any regulations or restrictions.** The plan is the legal basis or foundation for all local ordinances. All proposed ordinances have to be voted on by townspeople at future town meetings before they can be adopted.
- The plan is not forever or "cast in stone." It will be necessary to periodically review the plan to ensure that it continues to reflect the conditions and desires of the community. Often this is done every ten years.
- The plan contains three components:
 1. A description of the town for the past, present and future that includes population, economy, public facilities, public services and natural resources, etc.,
 2. Policies or Goals, statements about where the town wants to be in the future; and
 3. Strategies, how the town may achieve these goals

The Sections of a Comprehensive Plan

1. Executive Summary
2. History
3. Population
4. Housing
5. Economy
6. Transportation
7. Public Facilities & Services
8. Recreation
9. Natural and Marine Resources
10. Fiscal Capacity
11. Regional Coordination
12. Land Use
13. Capital Improvement Plan



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Why should we have a Comprehensive Plan?

- **To determine and protect those aspects of the community that are important to its citizens:** Controversies can be minimized when standards have been previously established to **encourage development that benefits and employs our residents**, as well protects the natural resources that support our traditional way of life, water supply and health.
- **To minimize fiscal and capital improvement costs to the town:** Efficiencies in fiscal management through planning and capital cost expenditures can be coordinated to reduce tax burdens.
- **To minimize future development costs to the town:** Currently, the potential exists for development to occur away from town services and that could be costly to all taxpayers in the future, like schools, fire safety, road maintenance, plowing, etc.
- **To access grant money:** Generally, without a comprehensive plan that has been deemed consistent with state law by the State Planning Office and adopted locally, the town is **not** eligible to apply for many Community Development Block Grants.
- **To avoid disadvantages with neighboring communities:** Most of our neighbors have comprehensive plans and so benefit from legal protections of their ordinances, and have grant opportunities. Why should we not have these same benefits and protections?
- **To protect existing ordinances from private legal challenge and from state intrusion:** The plan provides the legal foundation for ordinances that the town develops and that voters approve, these ordinances can apply to state projects as well as private development.

Please contact the Mid-Coast Regional Planning Commission for more information on comprehensive plans, land use ordinances, planning board and board of appeals procedures and any other land use issues facing your community.